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# STAFF NOTES:

## Soviet Union Eastern Europe

State Department review completed

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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE



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The Soviet Leadership

The Soviet political elite, the party Central Committee, will meet on Monday to discuss next year's economic plan and budget and hear a report on leadership activity since the last plenum in April.

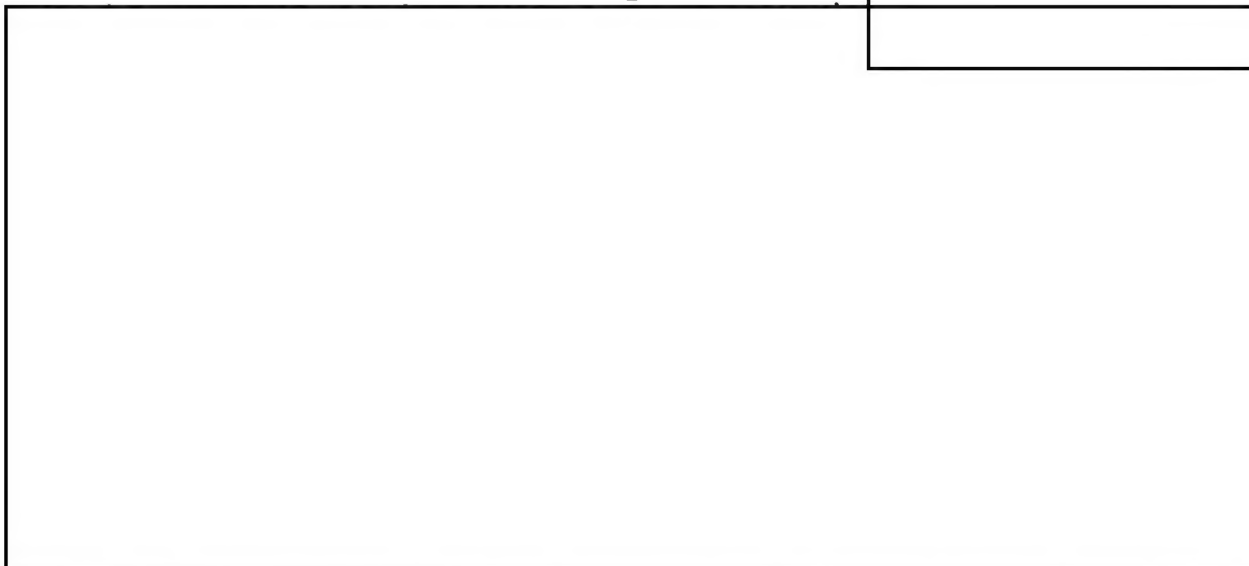
It is also expected to announce the agenda and speakers for the party congress next February, and it may make some changes in the positions of second echelon leaders. Any of these would provide clues to leadership and policy decisions to be made at the Congress.

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Aging Prompts Speculation

Most pre-Congress speculation has centered on the health of party chief Brezhnev and the question of whether or not he will stay in office.

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These circumstances have encouraged East European officials and Soviet officials abroad to predict leadership changes before or at the Congress. The most frequent theme is that Brezhnev will retire or transfer to an honorary post.

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Most reports carry no suggestion

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of a coup or major policy conflict. [REDACTED]

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The Shape of the Leadership

If change at the top is to be other than medically related and voluntary, what is the engine that will drive it? The senior leaders are not contenders for Brezhnev's job, and they probably identify their own security with keeping Brezhnev in place. Junior leaders who have long been waiting in the wings are still doing just that--waiting. Many are handicapped because they are poorly placed, lack a clear claim to a higher post, or have been ill. Those younger leaders who have shown impatience for power have already been weeded out.

In fact, the past year has reinforced the impression that if Brezhnev were to relinquish his post in the near future, Kirilenko would serve as an interim successor. [REDACTED]

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Brezhnev Faces Disappointments

Recent events could give rise to misgivings over various policies. The glow has worn off the two major programs announced by Brezhnev at the last Party Congress: detente and consumer welfare.

In Soviet eyes, the value of detente probably seems somewhat obscured now by political losses in the Middle East, the aggressive response in the West to CSCE, and uncertainties over SALT and the Washington summit. This fall, Brezhnev has devoted attention to domestic matters and the communist movement, perhaps in an effort to mend fences before the Party Congress, perhaps in direct response to reported criticism of his preoccupation with detente.

This year's harvest failure will have a dispiriting effect politically and spotlights the failure to meet the goals of the consumer program. Brezhnev has already had to admit this failure to the Central Committee, and a debate over emphasizing the growth of consumer industries has surfaced in economic and party journals.

Other business is pending. The draft of the next five year plan must be completed soon. Drafting the fifteen year plan has evidently run into difficulty. Progress on other projects mentioned in the past by Brezhnev, including a new constitution and rationalization of agricultural and industrial management, looks even more problematical.

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Despite these problems, the leadership seems willing to make adjustments in its basic policies without altering them fundamentally. Attractive alternatives to present policies have yet to be put forward with conviction.

The harvest disaster, for example, reflects poorly on the agricultural programs associated with Brezhnev, and politicians have already sought to head off criticism. In the end, however, the drought will probably be seen as an argument against abandoning the present heavy investments in agriculture and the development of the central Russian region. In addition, the drought makes the Soviet Union more dependent on grain imports from the West and, by extension, on detente--a dependency quietly given form in the recent five-year US-Soviet agreement on grain purchases.

#### Leadership Signals Awaited

The modest turnover in the membership of the Central Committee since the last Congress argues for stability at the top. No patterns have emerged in personnel changes that either strongly favored or detract from one or another leader. The series of party elections building up to the Congress are proceeding on schedule and in an unremarkable fashion.

The most telling indication of failure to prepare for succession is the absence of upward movement of junior members of the leadership. Recent additions to the Politburo have been older officials concerned with foreign policy who are not candidates for higher office. Meanwhile, full membership on the Politburo continues to be withheld from potential comers' like RSFSR Premier Solomentsev. Other leadership posts, such as party secretary for culture and trade unions chief, have been left vacant.

#### The Outlook

The Soviet leadership seems to be coasting on past momentum and the strength of habitual forms that could carry it through the Congress with little

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change. The need for a generational change is pressing; it is a growing factor for instability. As yet there is little evidence, however, of moves to unseat Brezhnev or other senior leaders or even of preparations for an orderly succession.

Deterioration in Brezhnev's health, of course, could at any time prompt a decision to retire or to assume an honorary post. He would be unlikely to retire strictly for political reasons. A voluntary decision, especially in favor of an interim succession under Kirilenko, might be made with little advanced warning and probably, in the short term, with a minimum of disruption to the leadership.

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USSR: Industry

Soviet industrial production in the last year of the 1971-75 plan period will grow by more than 6.5 percent--only slightly below last year's healthy increase of nearly 7 percent. Industrial growth for the five year plan, however, will fall short of the target by about one fifth.

Effects on consumer industries of the 1975 harvest failure are as yet only slightly apparent. Hence, the boost in the overall level of consumption posted for the first nine months of 1975 will continue for the balance of the year. Although the growth rate in meat production for the final three months of 1975 will be below the 11 percent increase achieved through the third quarter, it will be high enough to sustain meat supplies. Also, because of tight livestock feed supplies, we do not expect the output of dairy products to be maintained at the third quarter growth rate of 4 percent.

The machinery sector, led by instruments and computers, is up 10 percent through the third quarter, although production of oil equipment, diesel locomotives, and freight cars is below last year's levels. A decline in the growth of agricultural machinery from a 4-year average of 12.5 percent to 9 percent this year coincided with the poor harvest. The Soviets must sustain unusually high growth rates in this sector because a large share of past production is perpetually out of service as a result of high breakdown rates, shortages of spare parts, and a lack of skilled mechanics.

Growth in output of most consumer durables is accelerating slightly this year. The troubled clothing and textile sector, however, is facing an accumulating inventory and is shifting emphasis to quality rather than quantity.

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Most branches producing industrial materials have posted higher growth rates through September, with major increases in paper and paperboard, forest products, and chemicals. The improvement in paper production is significant because of the severe paper shortage of last year and early this year. Elsewhere in the materials sector, the failure of the ferrous metals branch to achieve the plan for rolled metals and steel pipe is adding to supply problems in some machinery branches.

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Ceausescu on the ECPC

Romanian media still have not commented on last week's preparatory meeting in East Berlin for the proposed European Communist Party Conference (ECPC). A Turkish news interview with President Ceausescu just prior to the session was printed in the party daily *Scinteia* on November 23. In the absence of anything else, the interview can be taken as an authoritative statement of Bucharest's position.

The interview provides a candid view of the obstacles the Kremlin encountered when it tried to use the ECPC to re-establish Soviet authority over the European parties. Ceausescu emphasized the independence of all participating parties by characterizing the proposed gathering as an "exchange of views" and "a means by which all forces should act to implement the principles adopted at Helsinki." He also questioned the need for a final ECPC document, noting that if one is adopted, it should be by "general consensus."

The Romanian leader restated Bucharest's ground rules for participating in the conference--no guiding center for international communism, a free exchange of ideas, and recognition that each party must set its own line in accordance with the realities in which it exists.

The embassy notes that there could hardly be a more limp and diluted attitude toward ECPC and adds that it has rarely seen Soviet and East German diplomats "so defensive and ill at ease" in discussing the Berlin meeting. By contrast, the Yugoslavs have seldom been more outspoken in describing the "regression" of the ECPC preparations and in acknowledging the gap between the "independents" and "orthodox" parties.

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Ceausescu Postpones Kuwait Visit

Romanian President Ceausescu has abruptly postponed the three-day visit to Kuwait that was scheduled to begin today. The stop in Kuwait was to precede a visit to Iran from November 27 to December 1. The Iranian visit will apparently still take place.

The Kuwaiti press speculates that Bucharest may have put off the visit because the Kuwait National Assembly failed--after four attempts--to ratify a bilateral trade agreement with Romania. The Assembly's debate centered on Romanian support for Israel in the UN, the fact that Romania was the only East European state that did not break relations with Israel in 1967, and Romania's failure to vote for the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism.

The Romanians have been successful in overcoming some of their problems with the more militantly anti-Israeli Arabs. They have, however, found it particularly difficult to convince the Kuwaitis of the merits of Bucharest's "balanced" Middle East policy. In an apparent effort to mollify Ceausescu, a spokesman for the Kuwait government has said that he will be welcome in his country at any time.

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Sino-Albanian Ties Appear Unchanged

Western press speculation about strains in Sino-Albanian relations appears to be unfounded.

A lead editorial in *Zeri I Popullit*, the Albanian party's official paper, gave a ringing endorsement to Tirana's ties with Peking on November 23, the anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. The paper noted that with China's aid, Albania "has built and is building a series of important projects for the national economy." The substance and tone of the editorial seem to lay to rest rumors that the Chinese have made any significant change in their aid commitment to the Albanians.

Tirana has reportedly just gone through a widespread personnel purge in a campaign against the growth of "bureaucracy." The extent to which the purge may have involved elements favoring better relations with Moscow is uncertain, but *Zeri I Popullit* left no stone unturned in striking out against all "revisionist enemies"--read, the Soviet Union and its supporters.

The same strident theme was taken up by Central Committee secretary and Politburo member Hysni Kapo in a recent address before the People's Assembly session, which is drafting a new constitution. Kapo asserted that the new constitution must endorse "a series of important revolutionizing measures" that the party has adopted to "uproot the evil of bureaucratism and liberalism."

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CHRONOLOGY

November 18 Italian President Leone begins a week-long state visit to the USSR and meets with President Podgorny.

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Czechoslovak party/state leader Husak confers with visiting Soviet Defense Minister Grechko.

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Deputy Foreign Trade Minister Grishin arrives in Cairo for an official visit concerning debt rescheduling and other aspects of Soviet-Egyptian economic relations.

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North Vietnamese party chief Le Duan commences a four-day stopover in Moscow en route home from Romania.

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Warsaw Pact defense ministers begin a two-day meeting in Prague.

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Italian and French Communist parties issue a joint statement repudiating "all foreign interference" in the domestic affairs of their nations.

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November 19 The "editorial commission" making preparations for the European Communist party conference completes a three-day meeting in East Berlin; the participants defer until at least January of 1976 any agreement on the final text and dates of the conference.

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Brezhnev confers with visiting Italian President Leone, who also

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November 19 has a meeting with Premier Kosygin  
and a second one with President  
Podgorny. [REDACTED]

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SALT negotiators have a two-hour  
meeting at Geneva and agree to  
reconvene in two weeks; US negotiator  
Johnson will return to Washington  
"for routine consultations." [REDACTED]

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The unmanned Soviet Soyuz-20 spacecraft  
docks with the Salyut-4 orbital station.

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Portuguese Communist party chief  
Cunhal concludes a three-day visit  
to Poland and goes to East Berlin,  
where he is feted at a dinner hosted  
by East German party chief Honecker.

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November 20 French Foreign Trade Minister  
Segard begins an official visit to  
the USSR for talks on energy matters.

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GDR Premier Sinder mann completes a  
four-day, official visit to Iran.

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Soviet embassy in Washington formally  
protests "Zionist" harassment of  
Soviet facilities in the US. [REDACTED]

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Czechoslovak party's Central Committee  
convenes in Prague to discuss eco-  
nomic plans for 1976. [REDACTED]

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Romania's Grand National Assembly  
convenes in Bucharest. [REDACTED]

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Polish party's Central Committee  
convenes for a plenary meeting in  
Warsaw. [REDACTED]

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November 20 Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Chnoupek completes a four-day official visit to The Netherlands, the first in bilateral relations since the formation of the Czechoslovak state in 1919. [REDACTED]

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November 21 Politburo member Suslov observes his 73rd birthday. [REDACTED]

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A conference of the Communist-front World Peace Council opens in Leningrad and awards Brezhnev its "gold medal of peace." [REDACTED]

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South Yemeni Foreign Minister Muti returns home from Moscow. [REDACTED]

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November 22 Mongolian Foreign Minister Rinchin concludes a six-day official visit to India. [REDACTED]

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Foreign Trade Minister Patolichev ends a two-day visit to Prague, where he signed a trade agreement for 1976-1980. [REDACTED]

Syrian Communist party chief Bakdash concludes a one-week official visit to Hungary. [REDACTED]

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USSR and Cuba sign in Moscow an agreement on cooperation in developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. [REDACTED]

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November 22 Soviet-Egyptian debt rescheduling  
talks commence in Cairo. [REDACTED]

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Romanian Foreign Trade Minister  
Patan begins an official visit to  
Iran. [REDACTED]

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USS *Bigelow* concludes a six-day,  
official port call at Rijeka,  
Yugoslavia. [REDACTED]

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November 23 Secretary of Agriculture Butz begins  
a brief official visit to Romania.  
[REDACTED]

November 24 Bulgarian party/state leader Zhivkov  
starts a five-day visit to West  
Germany. [REDACTED]

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Soviet-Norwegian Barents Sea con-  
tinental shelf talks resume in Oslo.  
[REDACTED]

Hungarian President Losonczi begins  
a four-day state visit to Libya; he  
will then go on to Tunisia for three  
days. [REDACTED]

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Italian President Leone completes  
his state visit to the USSR. [REDACTED]

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PLO Chairman Arafat begins a visit to  
the USSR. [REDACTED]

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Romanian-Iranian economic coopera-  
tion negotiations commence in  
Teheran. [REDACTED]

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November 25 Polish Foreign Trade Minister  
Olszewski commences a five-day  
official visit to Egypt. [REDACTED]

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November 25 Secretary of Agriculture Butz begins  
a four-day official visit to Poland.

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[REDACTED]  
Czechoslovak party-state leader Husak  
arrives in Moscow on an official visit  
and is met by the top three Soviet  
leaders. [REDACTED]

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FUTURE EVENTS

November 26 US and Soviet representatives to  
convene in Washington for bilateral  
talks on Law of the Sea issues. [REDACTED]

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November 27 Romanian President Ceausescu to  
commence a five-day state visit  
to Iran. [REDACTED]

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late November Yugoslav Foreign Minister Minic to  
make an official visit to The  
Netherlands. [REDACTED]

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USSR to launch a satellite containing  
US biological experiments. [REDACTED]

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December 1	CPSU Central Committee expected to convene in Moscow for a plenary meeting. [REDACTED]	25X1
	Turkish Prime Minister Demirel to begin a three-day official visit to Bulgaria. [REDACTED]	25X1
December 2	USSR Supreme Soviet to convene in Moscow. [REDACTED]	25X1
	Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sabah to begin an official visit to the USSR. [REDACTED]	25X1
December 3	Bulgarian parliament to convene. [REDACTED]	25X1
December 4	West German Foreign Minister Genscher to begin a two-day official visit to Romania. [REDACTED]	25X1
early December	US-Soviet committee on nuclear energy cooperation to convene in Washington. [REDACTED]	25X1
December 8	Yugoslav Foreign Minister Minic to begin a two-day official visit to the USSR. [REDACTED]	25X1
	Polish party congress to convene in Warsaw; party chief Gierek will deliver the keynote speech. [REDACTED]	25X1
December 10	Nobel Peace Prize to be awarded--undoubtedly <i>in absentia</i> --to Sakharov at Oslo; Soviet economist-mathematician Kantorovich to receive his Nobel prize in economics at Stockholm. [REDACTED]	25X1
December	Romanian party secretary Andrei to make an official visit to Israel. [REDACTED]	25X1

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mid-December A "working group" to convene in East Berlin for further work on the draft of the final document for the proposed pan-European Communist party conference.

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December 19 Brezhnev to mark his 69th birthday.

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